

and increased security. We truly and deeply appreciate the swift show of support.

It is ironic that an event that generated much love and support was based on an act of unexplainable hatred, expressed in violence. Our country united in spirit to combat terrorism and those who support terrorist activities, but it was New Yorkers who bore the brunt of the attack.

I urge my colleagues to join me tonight in honoring the resourcefulness of the residents of the greatest city in the world. New Yorkers should be proud of the way they handled the most devastating attack on American soil. They showed strength of character and generosity of spirit.

9/11 has left its devastating imprint on my city, and we will always remember the horror of that day, but the recovery process is underway. We will rebuild Manhattan in a way that honors the fallen and celebrates the living and all Americans will celebrate the spirit of renewal that New York embodies.

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE POWER CENTER AND PYRAMID COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I come today to honor the wonderful work of a premier facility in Houston, Texas. This facility is known as the Power Center. It will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary this week.

Mr. Speaker, the Power Center is a center of commerce and part of a community's revitalization. Through its creation and ongoing success the people of Harris County and Houston are able to not only see but also to be a part of what happens when a community comes together. One of the leaders of this great success that I wish to pay tribute to today is Reverend Kirbyjon Caldwell of the Pyramid Community Development Corporation.

It was the Pyramid Community Development Corporation, under Reverend Caldwell's leadership that gave life to the Power Center. What were once a vacant lot and a decaying former Kmart retail store is now a vital and valuable part of the Harris County-Houston community. The Power Center has led to the conservation and redevelopment in an area of southwest Houston and surrounding neighborhoods by improving housing conditions; assisting minorities, disadvantaged, and low income families to obtain home ownership. The Power Center has also provided other important public services to its neighbors and to the people of Houston.

Mr. Speaker, having hosted a very successful homeownership fair in my district, at which there were thousands of attendees, I am honored to have this opportunity to recognize an organization that understands the importance of that part of the American dream. The homeownership fair that I speak of, held in the 18th Congressional District of Texas, was sponsored in part by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the Houston Real Estate

Association. It was part of an ongoing effort entitled, "With Ownership, comes Wealth" (also known as WOW) of which I am a true proponent. Mr. Speaker, WOW is an important initiative from which I believe many people can benefit; individuals, families, and communities.

Currently, African Americans are underrepresented in homeownership rates. Forty-six percent of African Americans own their homes, compared to 67 percent of the Nation as a whole. Furthermore, in the state of Texas, the homeownership rate is only 63.8 percent. Unfortunately, in the 18th District, the homeownership rate is even lower at 55.3 percent. That is 8.5 points behind the state average and nearly 11 points behind the national average.

We have quite a bit of catching up to do. In fact, of the homes owned in the Houston area, only 13.2 percent of them have African American owners, and 5.1 percent have Hispanic owners. That is a terrible disparity and it must change. The WOW initiative and the homeownership fair are wonderful agents to accomplish that change. The Power Center through Pyramid Community Development Corporation and the development of Corinthian Pointe, Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, and the Windsor Village United Methodist Church are also agents of change committed to increasing homeownership in the Southwest Houston community.

Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell has facilitated the creation of the Power Center and the revitalization of a community with the help of that community and of many individuals. I would like to thank just a few of those individuals at this time. Particularly, I want to recognize Suzanne Caldwell, the wife and partner of Reverend Caldwell, Ginger and Jack Blanton, Deborah and Gardner Cannon, and Nancy and Rich Kinder. I also want to thank Audrey and Rev. Bill Lawson, Beth and Charles Miller, and Beckie and Gasper Mir for all of their hard work. In addition, Bobbie and John Nau, Katie and Patrick Oxford, Anita and Gerald Smith, Rosie Zamora and Kay and Fred Zeidman and the dynamic Board of Directors deserve our thanks for the work they have done to strengthen the Power Center and the Pyramid Community Development Corporation. Mr. Speaker, there are countless others who were it not for their dedication and direction, we would not be celebrating such a joyous 10th anniversary of Houston's Power Center, and I want to thank them also.

With that, I say congratulations to the Power Center, to its leadership and to the community that it serves. We offer our respect and thanks for all that you do to provide an improved quality of life for all Houstonians.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here as a member of the Washington waste watchers group, and I am here to focus on irresponsible spending on funds that miss the beneficiary and then go elsewhere.

Today's Washington waste watch, Mr. Speaker, highlights the taxpayer dollars that are sent to people other than those who they are intended to go for, and those are dollars that are supposed to go for certain beneficiaries of certain programs.

Americans should and would be shocked to know that their tax dollars are being sent to Washington, that they are funding benefits for dead people or prisoners and millions of people that simply lie on their applications in order to receive benefits that they do not qualify for.

The Washington bureaucracy, for example, is throwing away benefits that taxpayers spend their hard-earned money to fund and money that they send to D.C. Mr. Speaker, for example, 23 percent of all students whose loans were discharged due to disability claims are actually holding jobs, and many borrowers who receive death discharges are found to be clearly alive, Mr. Speaker, and in many cases, earning wages, 23 percent.

Medicaid, for example, paid \$1.6 million to a Wisconsin transportation company for multiple round trips to, among others, dead people that they clearly were not transporting.

Mr. Speaker, there are some good things going on, though. The Veterans Affairs Inspector General is using computer technology to identify individuals who may be defrauding the VA by receiving benefits that, again, for people they are receiving benefits for people that have already died. More than 5,500 possible cases have been identified and they have actually recovered \$4.7 million, but over the past 5 years, for example, law enforcement has arrested almost 7,000 fugitives who were illegally receiving food stamps. They included 1,500 accused drug offenders, Mr. Speaker, 31 murderers, 45 sex offenders and child molesters, hundreds wanted for assault and robbery.

Mr. Speaker, more than 25 percent of free and reduced price school lunches are being consumed by children whose families' income is way above what they should be to qualify for those programs, and then yet we do not have enough money, some people will say, for those that do qualify.

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The Veterans Affairs Inspector General estimated that roughly 13,700 incarcerated veterans have been paid